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## Top Holiday Travel Destinations

By Salim Jordan

Despite the high cost of fuel and other travel expenses, an estimated 63.5 million Americans are planning to travel at least 50 miles or more from home this Christmas and New Year. Hotel rates are up nearly 15% at some popular destinations, yet bookings are full or nearly full.

So where do all of these people plan to go?

Domestic Destinations According to AAA of the United States, here are the top destinations based on the number of bookings for each location.

Florida Orlando is the top destination for fairly obvious reasons but Ft. Lauderdale is also in the top ten. Florida offers a wealth of activities and options for families, singles, and all types of traveler. Perennial favorite Disney World will attract hundreds of thousands of visitors between Christmas and New Year's Eve, while other Florida attractions like Gatorland, Kennedy Space Center, and the Everglades will also be popular. It is also common for the beaches of Ft. Lauderdale to be filled with vacationers during the holiday season, which is second only to spring break in terms of number of tourists.

It is not too late to check out some of the great last minute deals throughout Florida. With a little research and a willingness to be flexible, you can still enjoy Florida this holiday season.

California California has three cities in the top ten travel destinations this holiday season — Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Diego. All three offer a wide range of activities for tourists of all ages, and the generally pleasant December weather in California makes it a favorite place for vacationers from colder climates in need of sunshine.

The Los Angeles area is the gateway to Disneyland and Knott's Berry Farm, two extremely popular amusement parks. Just a short drive to the south and east is San Diego, a relaxing area that is home to a laid-back lifestyle of beaches, surfing, and shopping.

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If an urban experience is more to your liking, opt for San Francisco, where you can enjoy international culture, a ride on the famous cable cars, a visit to the Golden Gate Bridge, and a winding trip down Lombard Street, touted as the "crookedest street" in the world.

Other great holiday escapes Some of the other most popular holiday escapes in the United States include New York City, Chicago, Boston, Nashville and Las Vegas.

The holidays are legendary in New York City, with ice-skating in Central Park and the elegant decorations around Rockefeller Center. In Chicago, visitors flock to the Navy Pier Winter Wonderfest as well as the famous holiday window display at Marshall Field's department store. You can't beat Boston, though, for a traditional New England holiday vacation. Check out the Prudential Center Christmas Tree, walk the Freedom Trail of historic Revolutionary War era sites, or do something entirely different and take Boston Duck Tour on a World War II era amphibious vehicle.

Looking for something a bit different? Consider Las Vegas for the holidays, where the abundance of

holiday lights dwarfs even the normal profusion of neon and color. Every casino along the strip works to outdo the others with lights and decorations, with some of the most amazing displays located at Caesars Palace, the Bellagio and the Monte Carlo.

One of the most relaxed holiday destinations in the U.S. is Nashville, home to the "down home country Christmas" festivities at the Opryland Resort and Grand Ole Opry as well as special holiday programs at the Country Music Hall Of Fame. Nashville's historic homes are also dressed up for the holidays, so think about taking a bus tour of the city to enjoy the spectacular lights and decorations.

International Destinations International travel is always popular around the holidays, and Americans are flocking to destinations all over the globe this holiday season. Australia It is icy and cold across much of the northern United States, but summer in Australia! For cultural attractions and urban festivities, tourists stop in Melbourne and enjoy some Christmas Carols at the Myer Music Bowl, or visit the famed Opera House in Sydney.

Since Christmas falls at the beginning of summer in Australia, many holiday visitors spend their vacation at a spectacular beach location such as Shark Bay, where diving enthusiasts can swim with dolphins and sharks, or along the Queensland Gold Coast, an area with over 30 kilometers of beautiful sandy beaches plus great restaurants, shopping, and an ever-present nightlife.

If you want a truly amazing holiday experience, go to Australia's Christmas Island, a pristine island that is largely a National Park and home to amazing plants and animals. You can scuba dive with whale sharks, enjoy the peace and quiet of a bird watching excursion, or seek adventure with a sport fishing trip in search of sailfish, tuna and wahoo.

Corsica This is one of the jewels of the Mediterranean, offering an amazing array of food, activities, and traditional holiday celebrations. Corsica is famous for its hospitality and beautiful lands, so it definitely belongs on your "short list" of exotic holiday getaways.

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Corsica is home to varied landscapes, ranging from sparkling beaches and Mediterranean ocean reserves to towering mountains and nature parks. Traditional holiday festivals include the renowned Fiera di a Castagna, or Chestnut Fair. This annual event attracts tens of thousands of visitors each year, who are treated to arts, crafts, food and entertainment related to one of the islands main products, the chestnut. It is a holiday tradition for tourists from across the European continent, and well worth exploring on your holiday vacation.

United Kingdom For a unique holiday experience, check out the United Kingdom this year. It is a perennially popular spot due to the many places of historical significance as well as culture and the arts. In London itself, you can see Parliament, visit the Tower of London, hear the sounds of Big Ben chiming the time, or ride a famed double Decker bus all around the city.

Visit Windsor Castle, the largest inhabited castle in the world and home to the British Sovereign for 900 years. You can tour this magnificent structure, getting a taste of the history and tradition of the British monarchy. When the Queen is in residence, you will see her standard flying high atop the round tower, visible from all directions as you enter the town.

If something sweeter is more to your liking, venture to Birmingham's own Cadbury World, known as the chocolate paradise. There you can learn all about the famous Cadbury Chocolates, enjoy samples, and watch how the chocolates are made, wrapped and packed. Father Christmas is on site throughout

the holidays, greeting children of all ages with a present of their very own.

Salim Jordan is Editor and Publisher of

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### **RoomSaver.com Releases Survey Results Profiling Holiday Travel Destinations**

**By Katie Glaser**

RoomSaver.com Releases Survey Results Profiling Holiday Travel Destinations

December 9, 2003, Virginia Beach, Va. - RoomSaver.com, the Web's most comprehensive source for hotel discounts and a division of Trader Publishing Company, today announced that a recent poll of their Travel Club members concluded that Florida and Disneyworld are the top travel destinations this holiday season.

## Top Holiday Travel Destinations

Members of RoomSaver.com's exclusive Travel Club responded to the question featured in the November issue of the Traveler's Tribune, "Where will you be traveling this holiday season?" Thirty percent of members are traveling to Florida. Rated second with 15 percent, were members who are staying at home to enjoy the festivities, while 10% are traveling to Texas. Visitors to New York (8%) and California (8%) rounded out the top 5 states. On a more specific level, 16% of the respondents are traveling to Disneyworld, while other members are flocking to Las Vegas (15%), Orlando (14%), taking a cruise in the Caribbean (10%) and visiting New Orleans (8%) over the holidays. Click here <http://www.roomsaver.com/holiday-poll> to view the pie chart, which details respondents' holiday destinations.

"We are thrilled that our members are taking the time to participate in our interactive polls," said RoomSaver.com Business Development Manager Brad Petersen. "Not only are they using RoomSaver.com to find a hotel discounts, but they are using the site as a resource to sound off about their travel preferences."

Designed to be the Internet resource for value-conscious travelers, RoomSaver.com provides travelers a user-friendly way to browse over 9,000 listings and easily navigate the detailed results. Additionally, travelers can join the Travel Club and receive weekly e-newsletters advising them of the week's lodging specials as well as save coupons to their online coupon book from session to session and throughout their membership.

Headquartered in Virginia Beach, Va., RoomSaver.com is a leading provider of online hotel coupons. As a division of Trader Publishing Company and part of Trader's family of over 20 Web sites, RoomSaver.com provides a comprehensive hotel coupon database for travelers while serving as a convenient and effective advertising forum for hoteliers and affiliate travel businesses. For more information about RoomSaver.com, call toll-free 800.766.6728 or visit [www.RoomSaver.com](http://www.RoomSaver.com).  
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